

TOPIC: Forced Marriage In Pakistan Causes and Consequences

(I) Introduction

Thesis: Women in Pakistan are facing various kind of violences, and worst of them is forced marriage, which inflicted upon the due to multiple factors, and has resulted in numerous consequences on the life of women.

(II) Causes of Forced Marriage.

- (a) Internalized patriarchy has resulted in women unconditional submission to what decision their male family member has made.
- (b) Societal standards of honour regulate women decision and behavior.
- (c) Old patriarchal traditions and norms of "Watta Satta" cause forced marriage.
- (e) In a country like Pakistan, daughter are considered as liability, which need to be fulfilled by their marriage as soon as possible.
- (f) Economic disparities let poor parents engaged in forced marriage of their daughters.
- (g) In Pakistan, where most of the parents are illiterate, pay no attention to their.

education, forcing their daughters to marry earlier and without their consent

- (b) At State level, weak enforcement of laws and conservative interpretation of religious laws ^{and lack of political will} has resulted in forced marriage.

~~In Pakistan, lack of will to act upon forced marriage has resulted in this type of violence~~

(III) Consequences

- (a) Gender based violence has increased
- (b) Women are facing depression, anxiety and emotional instability.
- (c) It has resulted in increased dependency trap.
- (d) Women literacy ratio fall down
- (e) Women health is compromised
- (f) Increased number of women killing by in laws
- (g) Persistent inequality at all levels
- (h) Damaged image of Pakistan Globally

(IV) Conclusion

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Previously
"A married women shall not be married until she is consulted, and an unmarried women shall not marry until her consent is asked" (Sahih Muslim)

In Pakistan, which came into being on the name of Islam, there are multiple teachings of Islam which has been ignored, and one of the most ignored teaching is consent in the marriage. This type of violence is faced by women or girls in Pakistan. Despite religious teaching and developed modern era, this practice is followed by Pakistanis due to multiple cultural traditions which sometimes surpassed the religious teachings and rules. Behind these traditional norms, there lie a deep ignorance and illiteracy which has rooted Pakistani society. Women in Pakistan are facing various kinds of violence and worst of them is a forced marriage which inflicted upon them due to multiple factors and has resulted in numerous consequences on the life of women. There are number of reasons behind this violence, including internalized patriarchy, social expectations and standards, expected customs and other social factors that has consequently resulted in unconditional

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Submission of women and forced marriage. The cause of forced marriage has damaged physical, psychological, social and economic well being of many of the women in Pakistan. However, this ^{social} problem is largely ignored by the law enforcement agencies and rulers of the country which has become the reason of poor image of the country globally.

To begin with the causes, the first cause of forced marriage is internalized patriarchy which demands complete and unconditional submission of women on whatever decision their family member has made for them which ultimately become the reason of forced marriage. Women in Pakistan consider male members of the family as a supreme authority which cannot be questioned or refused. Additionally, patriarchal reinforcement of patriarchy by community by calling a woman rebellion who does not pay submission has further glamorized the forced marriage in Pakistan. Therefore internalized patriarchy is one of the biggest cause of forced marriage.

Along with internalized patriarchy, societal standards of honour that regulate women's decisions and behaviour are the main reasons of the forced marriage in Pakistan. When a set of standards define what is honour for a woman, they meant the woman who is silent, obedient and the human with animal like features, who cannot decide by herself. The important decision of life, furthermore, the blind culture of Pakistan that give title of "karo/kari" or "kalo/kali" to the couple who married by their wish has impeded Pakistani society. In this culture, women are killed by their own family members in the name of honour. This culture of honour killing has created life threatening fear among the women and is the serious cause of forced marriage in Pakistan.

Beside societal standards, old tradition and norms are also the reasons of forced marriage. One of the norms, most common in Pakistan is the norm of "watta satta" which mean two relations are formed on interchange basis. If one who

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want their son to be married with the daughter of other family, he has to get ~~the~~ his daughter to the son of that family. This expired custom in society like Pakistan has resulted in ~~for~~ a marriage in which consent of the girls are ignored by their family members.

- Not only the old traditions, but economic disparities also let poor parent engaged in forced marriage of the daughter. According to World Bank 60% population of Pakistan live below the poverty line, which mean half of the population of Pakistan unable to earn three four bread for the family. This economic crises resulted in earlier marriage of the girls in which their consent is ignored. This poverty exploited by feudal lords or elite of the society as well. In rural Sindh and South Punjab, parent forced by these elite's and feudals to let their daughter, which most of the time are half of their age, with them, and in return they give them piece of land to harvest and earn bread & butter.

for the family. Therefore economic disparity is the biggest reason of forced marriage in Pakistan.

Additionally, in society like Pakistan, daughters are largely considered as liability which need to be fulfilled in which their consent has not been asked, causing forced marriage. Parents are often coerced in Pakistan to marry their daughter off on time. This societal pressure results in declaring daughter as social burden on the shoulder of the parent who under this pressure forced their daughter to marry without their consent. Hence this societal pressure has resulted in forced marriage in Pakistan.

Furthermore, the illiteracy is a major cause of forced marriage in Pakistan. According to Economic Survey of Pakistan literacy rate in Pakistan is 66% while men 40% of the population is illiterate. In this 40% most of them are the parents. This illiteracy led to forced marriage in Pakistan as these parents do not have

enough insights and broad level thinking to asked their daughters consent in marriage. Moreover they pay no attention to the education of their daughter and forced them early marriage without their consent. Therefore Literacy is a major cause of forced marriage in Pakistan.

Moreover, at State level, weak enforcement of laws, conservative interpretation of religious laws and lack of political will has resulted in forced marriage in Pakistan. Recently passed early marriage act was actually formed to curtail forced marriage of the children, specially the girls. However weak enforcement of these laws along with conflict with the religious interpretation has failed this law to be effectively implemented resulting forced marriage in the country. In September 2025, a teenage girl married according to wishes of the family. Lahore high court declare this marriage legal by insighting religious age of puberty. This conflict in the interpretation further complicated the problem of forced marriage.

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Without resolving it, allowing these violent practices to persist. Additionally, lack of political will to act on this problem is also a major reason of forced marriage. As Government of K.P. and Balochistan has not framed laws either for early or forced marriage to stop this evil practice of early marriage hence weak, conflicting interpretation and enforcement of laws and lack of political will to solve this problem cause the cause of forced marriage to persist in the Pakistan.

As discussed above. The numerous causes of forced marriage, it is highly considerable to discuss the high cost consequences which are result of the forced marriage.

The most violent consequence of forced marriage is gender based violence. According to UN based research ²⁰²¹ 34% women in Pakistan has faced gender based violence after their marriage which is largely due to forced or imposed relationship by the family. Among those 34%, 66% of women do not seek help

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from any one due to stigma attached to this violence and ignorant culture of victim blaming in Pakistan. The women who are forced to get married are considered as fragile and on them their partner can easily inflict violent behavior. So, the forced marriage consequently has resulted in gender based violence.

In addition to this, in forced relationship women face depression, anxiety and emotional instability. The forced marriage cause women to accept a relation in which her happiness are ~~not~~ considered, sacrificing their right to pleasure and happiness of the new relationship. This forceful marriage results in multiple conflict with the partner and her in laws, causing depression in the women. Forceful marriage results in loss of expectations, causing expectation and outcome to get wide, which ultimately result in anxiety and lack of emotional stability in men women and in their family as well. Hence forced marriage disturbed the family structure, which is important pillar of society according to sociology.

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Moreover, Most of the forced marriage are imposed on the women at the cost of their economic independence, putting a woman into a forever trap of dependency. In countries like Pakistan, most of the in laws demand a woman who actively perform house chores and take care of her children, instead of independent women who can make her own decision. This demand along with peaceful relationship make women completely dependent on her partner, causing fragility and dependence among women.

Not only economic dependence, forced marriage also put full stop on the education of the women. In Pakistan, where women consent in her ~~education~~ ^{marriage} often ignored ^{has} ~~is~~ ^{distorted} women to get education. According to Economic Survey of Pakistan literacy rate of women is 46% which means more than half of the women are not educated which is the consequences of forced marriage. Hence forced marriage is resulted in fallen literacy rate of the women in the country.

Along with economic and education cost, forced marriage cause health related issues in the women. Women in a forced marriage have taken for granted by her father and in law his ignorant attitude of Inlaws consequently result in compromised women health. According to UN Women, women in Pakistan has lacked access to healthcare which is due to permission issues from women. It also highlighted that only 1% women in Pakistan are taken by well trained maternal care, resulting compromised health of the women. Hence forced marriage consequently has resulted in health issues for the women.

Furthermore, forced marriage ^{has} resulted in increased rate of femicide. In a forced marriage, when a woman do not for her conduct according to demands of her Inlaws and refuse to pay submission, cause killing of the women, as these type of women tagged as disobedient and rebellion. These type of title ^{are} given to her to justify violence and killing of the women. According to

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UN femicide report 240 women are killed by their male counterparts daily, and this type of murdered etc witnessed in Pakistan many times, which are result of forced marriage of the women.

In addition to femicide, persistent inequalities at all levels are also result of forced marriage. When females are forced to marry, they are supposed to waive all the rights which are given to her by laws. She refused to get inheritance rights, right to education, right to do business etc which cause unequal education, less economic participation ratio, and property right ratio. These inequalities cause women to be prisoners in the four walls of the home in the mercy of her parents or in laws. So, forced marriage has result in increasing inequalities at all level.

The consequences of forced marriage are not limited to domestic level, it has severe consequence on the image and reputation of the

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Global

globally. According Gender parity Pakistan ranked 148 countries out of 148 countries on gender parity scale. The last rank of the country on global index severely damaged the image of Pakistan as a democratic state. This damage image is due to worst conditions of women factors either in political participation, education or economic participation which are due to forced marriage of the women. Therefore forced marriage of the women has damaged the image of the country on global scale.

Conclusively, forced marriage has multiple and multilevel consequences, damaging well being of the women as well as well being of society of Pakistan as a whole. Forced marriage is worst kind of violence that women in Pakistan are still facing in this modernized era. Despite teaching of prophet (P.B.U.H) and religious clearance on this matter forced marriage has become the part of tradition and culture of Pakistan, which reflects in internalized patriarchy, explicit and illogical traditions, regulated by

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Social norms. Caused by economic disparities, illiteracy weak and conflicting implementation of laws, forced marriage not only impacted domestic well being of the country, but it has also damaged the image of Pakistan globally. The forced marriage in Pakistan requires immediate and actionable measures at state level. Only forming an act to stop child, only of forced marriage would not be enough if Pakistan ~~has~~ need economic, social well being. Religious scholars, and Islamic Ideology Council must be involved to resolve this issue as forced marriage is not encouraged by Islam as well.